

**Senate Bill 1041 Implementation
Field Monitoring
Visit Summary**

Butte County

Visit Date: June 9, 2014

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Welfare to Work Division
Todd R. Bland, Deputy Director

Butte County
Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation
Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Executive Summary

Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit

The purpose of the Senate Bill (SB) 1041 implementation field monitoring visit is to obtain information regarding the county's progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012).

Scope of Field Monitoring Visit

Specifically, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will review how each County Welfare Department (CWD) implemented SB 1041 program changes, including but not limited to:

- New Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- Reengagement of the short term young child exempt population (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4 group);
- CWD staff knowledge of SB 1041 changes;
- Training provided to staff in order to implement these changes; and
- Any pertinent data related to these program changes that are available.

Goals of Field Monitoring Visit

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is being implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather promising practices in regards to implementation, to share these promising practices (when able) amongst all CWDs throughout the State, and to determine whether systematic or program issues relating to the integration of SB 1041 changes into the existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and WTW program exist throughout the state. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup.

County Visit General Information

This one-day field monitoring visit was performed in Butte County on Monday, June 9, 2014, at the Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services office in Oroville, CA. The field monitoring visit team included four staff from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Butte County's Director, Program Manager, Program Analyst, Senior Employment Case Manager, and an Employment Case Manager. The field monitoring visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff and administrator interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

Beginning December 2012, Butte County started providing staff with training on SB 1041 program changes. The training was provided in a Team Meeting with a PowerPoint presentation. As CDSS provided additional information and clarification, additional trainings were provided in May and October of 2013. The May 2013 training was provided in a Team Meeting with updates and clarifications stemming from Q&A ACL's 13-5 and 13-37. The October 2013 training was provided in smaller Unit Meetings with a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying training materials developed by Butte County. The focus of the training was how to track the time clock in C-IV.

Butte County also used other forms and documents for training staff that include the following:

- "Highlights of ACL 12-67" given out to Employment Case Managers in early January 2013.
- "Transitioning Your Clients to the New Requirements" given to Employment Case Managers in early January 2013.
- A journal template to document the comprehensive discussion Case Managers had with clients regarding the SB 1041 program changes.
- "24-Month Time Clock Fix Guidelines" detailing what starts the 24-Month Time Clock and the necessary steps to take in C-IV to manually engage the clock, count/exempt months, and notice the client if needed.
- "CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock Hourly Work Participation Requirements Flow Chart" provided with ACL 14-16.

All engagements of the 24-Month Time Clock were reviewed for accuracy by supervisory staff to confirm that conditions are met and manual updates are completed in the C-IV system to begin the clock.

Successes

Butte County's approach to implementation of SB 1041 was well planned and comprehensive. Starting in 2012, prior to implementation of SB 1041, Program Managers began discussions on the impending changes to the CalWORKs Welfare-to Work program and how the day-to-day case management would be affected. Butte County took on the SB 1041 complexity and implementation by providing staff with training through program meetings, PowerPoint presentations, unit meetings, handouts, Q & A sessions with Analysts and Program Managers, and provided copies of ACLs regarding SB 1041.

Other Butte County successes include:

- Butte County provides a One-Stop, client friendly employment and social services offices in two county locations. Applicants are saved a trip and are informed of all the services they qualify for at the two county offices.

- Butte County has a good and close relationship with the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entity, which makes employment services possible. Butte County has a contract with the local WIA agency to engage clients in subsidized employment, which has proven to be successful.
- The Welfare Advocates did not raise any concerns with the Butte County Welfare Department (CWD) on a call with the CDSS conducted on June 2, 2014. The local welfare advocate community in Butte is the Legal Services of Northern California, which has a very healthy and very good relationship with the Butte County CWD.

Key Recommendations

There are potential issues with Butte County de-registering sanctioned and exempt clients. Sanctioned clients are not receiving the required sanction notices and outreach to these clients are prevented until the annual redetermination. The CDSS recommends that Butte County not deregister the sanction and exempt populations in order that they receive the proper information, notices, treatment, and are accurately counted.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks the Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services for hosting this field monitoring visit. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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Background and Data

Butte at-a-glance

Total Caseload	3,482
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report [CA 237 CW] Line Item 8a-March 2014)	
WTW Enrollees	1,169
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1-March 2014)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance)	1,730
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1, 3A, and 31- March 2014)	
Reengagement Plan Received	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement	February 1, 2013
Consortium System	C-IV

Data/Statistics Available at the Time of Field Monitoring Visit

- Clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013 who have had their comprehensive discussion: **The number of clients that received the discussion was not tracked. However, Butte County Employment Case Managers were instructed that all discussions were to be completed as of June 1, 2013 and Butte County is confident that most if not all of these clients had this comprehensive discussion.**
- Clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013 who have had their comprehensive discussion: **The number of clients that received the discussion was not tracked. However, Butte County Employment Case Managers were instructed that all discussions were to be completed as of June 1, 2013 and Butte County is confident that most if not all of these clients had this comprehensive discussion.**
- Clients in the re-engagement process (i.e. scheduled to attend a reengagement appointment, completing assessment, completing the comprehensive discussion, signing a post-assessment Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2): Butte County completed Group 2 and have reengaged **183 clients. The county is now working on Group 3.**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **2**
- Clients who have elected to take the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **473**

Summary of Documents provided by Butte County

- SB 1041 related training materials including instructional procedure handouts, Employment Services question and answer guide, flow charts, checklists, copy of Power Point presentation and other relevant training materials.
- Journal template for review of new Welfare-to-Work regulations.
- Butte County Reengagement Group Statistics.
- Description of the “Wellness-to-Work” Visiting Health Nurse Program.
- Description of Butte County’s Career Discoveries activity which is contracted out to the local Regional Occupational Program (ROP) to provide for CalWORK’s Welfare-to-Work participants.
- Butte County’s Monthly CalWORKs attendance log.
- Butte County’s AB X4 4 Short Term Exemption Reengagement Sequencing Plan.
- Flyer for Butte County’s “Parent Cafe” which is offered to clients in the Oroville and Chico offices.
- Participant case success story from Butte County’s AB 109 program.

County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews

The CDSS field monitoring team used the county administrator and caseworker interview tools released in All County Information Notice I-42-13 to interview the Butte County Senior Employment Case Manager and Employment Case Manager in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to the Butte County Administrators in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff and a program manager and a Senior Administrative Analyst. The case manager interviews were conducted by four CDSS staff members with two Employment Case Managers.

Summary of Observations

WTW 24-Month Time Clock Implementation and New WTW Participation Requirements

Transitioning Clients

[With less than and more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013]

Butte County released the *WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice* (CW 2205) to clients on November 9, 2012. Beyond the general informing notice (CW 2205), clients were informed via in person interviews. Calling the client is not utilized due to the difficulty of explaining the new rules and the client understanding the requirements via phone. Butte County began comprehensive discussions with all existing clients, regardless of time left on CalWORKs aid on January 1, 2013. All new clients had their comprehensive discussions with their case managers before signing the WTW 2 for their activity options. Butte County used the paper WTW 2 prior to its availability in the C-IV system. At the time of the field monitoring visit, Butte County had completed all comprehensive discussions.

Butte County reported that the lower hourly requirements are being used, especially regarding the single-parent households with a child under the age of six. Clients were informed of the flexibility allowed while utilizing the 24-Month Time Clock. However, more than half the clients have chosen to sign the WTW plan to not use their 24-Month Time Clock, which Butte County attributes to its successful Work Experience and Subsidized Employment programs that allow its clients to meet their core hourly requirements in these activities. Butte County also has a large number of students in Self-Initiated Program (SIP) and Vocational Education plans due to having Butte Community College and California State University, Chico available locally, which allows clients to meet their core hourly requirements.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

If clients did not respond to the Employment Case Manager and did not have a plan that met the new participation requirements, then the non-compliance process was initiated. If client contact is still unsuccessful, then a home visit is conducted by the Employment Case Manager (ECM) prior to implementing the sanction as a last resort to engage the client. Butte County also has a Rapid Response team that works with WTW sanctioned clients that are partially participating, and are offered the option to cure their sanction and conduct the comprehensive discussion. Sanctioned clients are sent letters regarding the Subsidized Employment (AB98) program as an avenue to cure their sanction through participation in this activity.

General Comments

Butte County has two offices staffed in Oroville and Chico to assist clients with Eligibility and WTW. The Employment and Eligibility staffs are housed together in the same room, but have separate tasks. The offices are One-Stop shops where applicants are informed what types of public aid they qualify for.

The average caseload for CalWORKs employment worker is 55-60 cases. The county has no sanction caseload since the non-participating client is de-registered from the program instead of being sanctioned.

Butte County has been using Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock Informing Notice (CW 2208) to inform clients of time left on their WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

New Young Child Exemption

Both existing and new eligible clients in Butte County are opting to take the New Young Child Exemption. These clients have chosen to stop their CW 48-Month Time Clock and WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Many have chosen to volunteer as an exempt parent. Some two-parent households have chosen to share the exemption.

Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services

Butte County reported that good cause cases for lack of supportive services has never been an issue in the county because the county has always had supportive services funding available to aid the client.

The New WTW Plan Activity Assignment Form (WTW 2)

Butte County started using the new WTW 2 on January 1, 2013, using the PDF document provided on the CDSS web site. The Employment case worker saved a copy of the document, completed it with the parent, and imaged/indexed the completed agreement into the parent's case in C-IV. The activities and the agreement to match the written plan were entered in the parent's case in C-IV.

Student clients in a Vocational Education activity use the WTW 2 to meet federal core requirements, and use the side designed to use the 24-Month Time Clock after the 12-month lifetime limit is exhausted. If the parent meets core hours in another activity after the 12-month lifetime limit is exhausted, the parent may use the federal side to save the 24-Month Time Clock.

General Comments

The Butte County worker noted that the way the differences in the plans were presented worked well. However, the requirement that all Supportive Services required signatures and dates did not bode well. The county worker would change the Total Hourly Requirements section by rewording it for better understanding by all parties involved.

Reengagement Process

Butte County began reengaging individuals exempt under the AB X4 4 Short on February 1, 2013. Butte County stated that its reengagement process is proceeding smoothly. Butte County's Reengagement Sequencing Plan was as follows:

- **Beginning February 1, 2013:** Reengage clients whose exemptions would have ended between January 1 and June 30, 2013, minus the volunteers.
- **Beginning July 1, 2013:** Reengage clients whose exemptions would have ended between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, minus the volunteers.
- **Beginning January 1, 2014:** Reengage clients whose exemptions would have ended between July 1 and December 31, 2014, plus all volunteers.
- **Beginning July 1, 2014:** Reengage clients whose exemptions would have ended after December 31, 2014.

Butte County initiated their reengagement process by having the county caseworker notify the client three times of the upcoming re-engagement appointment as directed by state guidelines, and documenting each notice in the parent's journal. At the first appointment, the parent is informed of the CalWORKs rules and regulations, including participation hours for 30/20/35 hours

per week in approved activities; the sanction/compliance; supportive services, child care and transportation, including bus passes, ancillary services and personal counseling; learning needs screen and evaluation, exemptions, good progress, good cause , and assigned activities.

The SB 1041 comprehensive discussion is explained to the parent:

- 1) Hourly participation requirements for the family.
- 2) 24-Month Time Clock, including the following,
 - (a) Waiver of core hourly requirements during the 24-month time period,
 - (b) The activities available to the client during the 24-month time period,
 - (c) How months are counted during the 24-month period,
 - (d) Post 24-month time clock participation requirements,
 - (e) 24-month clock stoppers.
- 3) Available WTW exemptions, including the new young child exemption and volunteering while on this exemption.
- 4) Supportive Services.

The parent's time limits are discussed. Possible barriers to participation or employment are identified. Determination of where the parent was in the program when the AB X4 4 short-term exemption as applied and proceed from there. Parent's past participation is explored, the first activity and supportive services needed are identified and an activity agreement is signed for that activity. The parent may need to complete Assessment before signing the WTW2. The parent will be considered re-engaged once the WTW2 is signed designating a 24-Month Time limit or a federal plan and supportive services are identified and provided. The 24-Month Time Clock will be engaged the first of the following month. The parent may enter into a new exemption if eligible. The 24-Month Time Clock will not be engaged until the parent returns to participation at the end of the exemption and completes the criteria to engage it.

General Comments

Butte County is on schedule with its sequencing plan and identifying outcomes (e.g., Reengaged, Sanctioned, Exempt, Discontinued, Good Cause). There were issues with reengaging volunteers. Because exempt clients had been participating satisfactorily, some county workers were confused about this population and the reengagement noticing requirements. Also, Butte County explains the benefits of volunteering versus reengaging, and what effect the client's decision would have on their time clock. After the discussion, if the client still wishes to reengage, then the county reengages the client in the program. For clients wanting to volunteer, the process is to have the client complete an Assessment, develop a WTW Plan, and have the client sign a WTW 2 as a volunteer. The worker then enters an exempt volunteer status in C-IV.

Implementation Strategies

Starting in 2012, prior to implementation of SB 1041, Program Managers began discussions on the impending changes to the CalWORKs Welfare-to Work program and how the day-to-day case

management would be affected. The changes created new challenges for Butte County as the details and new requirements of CalWORKs was confusing and overwhelming for the staff. However, Butte County took on the SB 1041 complexity and implementation by providing staff with training through program meetings, PowerPoint presentations, unit meetings, handouts, Q & A sessions with Analysts and Program Managers, and provide copies of ACLs regarding SB 1041.

Case Reviews

The CDSS field monitoring team reviewed five cases selected by Butte County in advance of the visit. The purpose of this component of the visit was to review how SB 1041 program changes are being integrated into case management, understand how SB 1041 policies are being operationalized by individual county caseworkers, and better comprehend case management within Butte County.

There were five specific case types requested:

- Case One - A client with ***less than or equal to*** 24-months left on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Two - A client with ***more than*** 24-months on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Three - A new client (beginning date of aid January 1, 2013 or later);
- Case Four - A client who was sanctioned, had reported earnings and whose case was curable based on the new participation requirements (preferably a case actually cured since January 1, 2013 based on new participation requirements); and
- Case Five - A client that was part of the short term young child exemption (AB X4 4) population, and is in the process of or has been reengaged (if applicable).

General Comments

Butte County uses the C-IV case management system. The following is a summary of the case findings:

- Noticing Requirements
All noticing requirements were met for all cases reviewed. However, no sanction notices sent out since the county does not sanction, but rather, de-registers a client.
- Comprehensive Discussions and Additional Outreach
Comprehensive discussions and additional outreach were performed for all case files reviewed.
- WTW Plan Activity Assignment Form (WTW 2)

All case files reviewed with WTW plans developed on or after January 2013 used the new WTW 2. One case reviewed did not have a WTW 2 due to the client's pre-assessment activities and a sanction.

- Sanction Case
Butte County has no sanction caseload. Clients are deregistered instead of being sanctioned.
- Reengagement Case
Only the client that was part of the short term young child exemption (AB X4 4) population was noted to have met the reengagement noticing requirements.
- New Young Child Exemption
None of the cases reviewed applied to the New Young Child Exemption. However, Butte County workers stated that existing and new eligible clients in Butte County are opting to take the New Young Child Exemption.
- Learning Disability Screening and Supportive Services
A learning disability screening was offered to clients in all cases reviewed. Supportive Services were offered and/or issued and were documented in all of the case files reviewed, with the exception of new cases.

Conclusion

Successes

Butte County's approach to implementation of SB 1041 was highly well planned and comprehensive. Starting in 2012, prior to implementation of SB 1041, Program Managers began discussions on the impending changes to the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program and how the day-to-day case management would be affected. Butte County took on the SB 1041 complexity and implementation by providing staff with training through program meetings, PowerPoint presentations, unit meetings, handouts, Q & A sessions with Analysts and Program Managers, and provide copies of ACLs regarding SB 1041.

Other Butte County successes include:

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- Butte County has a good and close relationship with the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entity, which makes employment services possible. Butte County has a contract with the local WIA to engage clients in subsidized employment, which has proven to be successful.

- The Welfare Advocates did not raise any concerns with the Butte County Welfare Department (CWD) on a call with the CDSS conducted on June 2, 2014. The local welfare advocate community in Butte is the Legal Services of Northern California, which has a very healthy and very good relationship with the Butte County CWD.
- Butte County noticed gaps in client participation so it developed a Life Lab with an open entry/exit model. Clients can attend the class to learn about budgeting, nutrition, GED preparation, interviewing help, etc. Clients can make up participation hours in the class if they are short work hours.
- Butte County has a very good partnership with Butte Community College, which provides job skills workshop and job search. The county meets semi-annually with the college and has regular phone contacts. Butte College also provides a work study program by making available in-campus jobs, as well as develop off-campus work.

Challenges

The SB 1041 changes created new challenges for Butte County as the details and new requirements of CalWORKs was confusing and overwhelming for the staff. However, Butte County took on the SB 1041 complexity and implementation by providing staff with training through program meetings, PowerPoint presentations, unit meetings, handouts, Q & A sessions with Analysts and Program Managers, and provide copies of ACLs regarding SB 1041.

Butte County is challenged in trying to increase its Work Participation Rate, which is affected negatively by clients that have exemption and good cause standings.

Key Recommendations

There are potential issues with Butte County deregistering sanctioned and exempt clients. Sanctioned clients are not receiving the required sanction notices and outreach to these clients are prevented until the annual redetermination. The CDSS recommends that Butte County not deregister the sanction and exempt populations in order that they receive the proper information, notices, treatment, and are accurately counted.

Contact

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